

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims replaces all previous listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) Open-celled foam beads having a mean bead diameter of from 1 to 10 mm and a bulk density of from 5 to 200 g/l based on propylene-polymersa propylene polymer and having a proportion of open cells (in accordance with DIN ISO 4590) of greater than 40%.
2. (Previously presented) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, wherein the propylene polymer is a homopolymer or copolymer of propylene with up to 15% by weight of a monomer selected from the group consisting of ethylene and 1-butene and mixtures thereof.
3. (Original) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, which have, in the DSC thermodiagram, at least one high-temperature peak at a higher temperature than the melting peak of the propylene polymer employed.
4. (Original) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mean cell diameter is from 0.01 to 0.5 mm.
5. (Original) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, which have a content of from 1 to 40% by weight of a cell opener.
6. (Withdrawn) A process for the production of open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1 by impregnating propylene polymer beads in suspension with a volatile blowing agent in a pressure container at elevated temperature and subsequently decompressing the mixture,

wherein the propylene polymer beads comprise from 1 to 40% by weight of a cell opener.

7. (Withdrawn) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the blowing agent is an organic compound having a boiling point of between -5 and 150°C.

8. (Withdrawn) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the cell opener is a polar, water-insoluble thermoplastic.

9. (Withdrawn) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the cell opener is a needle-shaped inorganic solid.

10. (Withdrawn) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the cell opener is a water-soluble polymer.

11. (Withdrawn) An open-celled foam molding produced by post-expansion and sintering of the foam beads as claimed in claim 1.

12. (Withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 6, wherein said blowing agent is selected from the group consisting of C₄- to C₆-hydrocarbons and inorganic gases.

13. (Withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein said polar, water-insoluble thermoplastic is selected from the group consisting of polyamide and polyoxymethylene.

14. (Withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 9, wherein said inorganic solid is cut glass having a length of from 0.25 to 5 mm.

15. (Withdrawn) The process as claimed in claim 10, wherein said water-soluble polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyvinyl acetate, and polyethylene oxide.
16. (New) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, wherein the proportion of open cells is greater than 50%.
17. (New) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, wherein the proportion of open cells is greater than 75%.
18. (New) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mean cell diameter is from 0.05 to 0.3 mm.
19. (New) Open-celled foam beads as claimed in claim 1, wherein the open-celled foam beads are produced from microgranules comprising of from 5 to 35% of polyamid (PA), polyoxymethylene (PaM), polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP), or a mixture thereof, and cut glass.